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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program, the achievements of the program, its implications for educational policy, and its future goals. It notes that PFF was created to address the challenges faced by higher education by helping graduate students prepare to become tomorrow's faculty, strengthening their preparation as teachers of undergraduates, and creating new paths in doctoral education. PFF is especially designed to bring together research universities and nearby undergraduate and community colleges, which provide the bulk of employment opportunities for new Ph.D.s. The paper describes the types of activities undertaken by PFF institutions and departments, and reports the results of a survey of PFF participants, including graduate students, faculty, and administrators. It notes that the vast majority of participants would recommend PFF to their colleagues. The paper encourages graduate faculty members, graduate schools, and graduate students to adopt PFF approaches that go beyond teaching assistant training, so as to help graduate students understand the full complexity of faculty roles and the career paths that are open to them. (MDM)

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THE PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY PROGRAM AND TEACHING ASSISTANT TRAINING
BUILDING BRIDGES

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HE 031 356

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This paper is adapted from the keynote address, "The Preparing Future Faculty Program and Teaching Assistant Training: Building Bridges," given at the Fifth National Graduate Teaching Assistant Conference, sponsored by the University of Colorado, November 1995.

I would like to extend my thanks to the organizers of this conference for the chance to share in this occasion. The first Graduate Teaching Assistant Conference, organized nine years ago at Ohio State University under the leadership of Nancy Chism and Roger Sell, was one in which I had a hand. Therefore, as I join you at this fifth conference, I have a fine feeling of coming home. To be back among so many friends is a happy occasion, and I am confident that our friendships will deepen and continue.

This year's conference theme—"The Professional Apprenticeship: TA's in the Twenty-First Century"—is particularly appropriate, for it links a particular method of learning—apprenticeship—with higher education's need for well-prepared faculty members. An apprenticeship requires interaction between teacher and learner. Any full education must be the result not only of instruction and training, but also in great part of *personal association or apprenticeship.* The term "professional apprenticeship" in turn suggests that a graduate TA is not simply performing a job, but is preparing for a career: in this instance, for the professoriate.

All this brings me to my own work with the Preparing Future Faculty program (PFF). Today I would like to review four aspects of our work with PFF: current PFF programs, their achievements to date, the implications of PFF for graduate education policy, and future steps for the PFF effort.

Before doing so, however, let me create a backdrop against which to understand PFF. Doctoral students in the United States today are matriculating into an educational system that is arguably the finest in the world. Graduate education is a well-established element of that system, with a rich history that now dates back over one hundred years. Yet American graduate education is also entering a period of volatile change. To quote Jules LaPidus, president of the Council of Graduate Schools, we have entered into "a period of deep-seated changes…that will affect how universities are viewed by students, faculty, states, and the federal government."

The forces driving these changes are familiar. They include vocal criticism of higher education from interested observers both inside and outside the academy, changing student demographics, structural changes in universities themselves, and changes in attitudes and values in society at large. Of these forces, perhaps the most powerful just now is the barrage of criticism leveled at the academy by the press, legislators, and citizen observers. Among the foci for their critique are promotion and tenure policies, the amount of time spent by faculty on research rather than classroom teaching, perceived declines in the quality and skills of college graduates, the use of graduate students to teach large undergraduate classes, perceived failure of the universities to respond to the needs and concerns of local communities, the practice of faculty accepting lucrative consulting fees, and the impact of publishing expectations on faculty teaching time and skills.

Under these conflicting pressures, many new professors find themselves barely able to keep their heads above the water. In a recent article entitled "Am I Ready for This?" the *New York Times Magazine* profiled a young professor who was almost traumatized by his responsibilities as a new faculty member. The headline read "A New Professor Faces the Jitters—and Endless Work of Becoming a Faculty Member."

Considering that the world of higher education is in the midst of change, the twenty-first-century university must intervene in the way faculty are prepared by reshaping graduate education. This can and should be a transformation. We are beginning to create new paths for doctoral education. We need the good sense to recognize the need for change—to strengthen it—and to make sure that it takes hold.

THE PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY MODEL

To meet this challenge is the mission of the Preparing Future Faculty program. Though PFF programs differ, all are united by a common vision: to enable future professors to perform the entire range of faculty roles from the very beginning of their careers. To do so, PFF sets new priorities in graduate education. Begun in 1994, the Preparing Future Faculty program is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and administered by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). Through PFF, nearly one million dollars has been awarded to seventeen of America's finest universities. Working in conjunction with sixty-six partner institutions, they involved nearly four hundred doctoral students in PFF positions during the 1994–1995 academic year. Each of these programs was carefully designed to enable the participants to enter the professoriate as trained professionals, able immediately to assume their full responsibilities as faculty members and members of an academic community.

PFF did not develop in a vacuum, but rather builds on an extensive body of pilot projects, institutional initiatives, and literature created by schools, institutions, funding agencies, and scholars deeply concerned with the future of graduate education. Among the most important influences were the papers and discussions generated by the National Graduate TA Conferences organized by Ohio State University, the University of Washington, and, now, the University of Colorado. Also influential were demonstration projects at several universities that tested alter-

native models for graduate education, including programs at Brown, Duke, Emory, Loyola, Rochester, and Syracuse. PFF also sought to create networks of institutions and funding agencies that would bring a cross-section of the higher education community together to work on the problem of faculty preparation. Funding agency interest and support has come from the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education and from The Pew Charitable Trusts. Contributions to the intellectual architecture of the program have come from learned societies and from higher education organizations like the American Association for Higher Education as well as the sponsoring organizations themselves, AAC&U and CGS. In sum, PFF is built on previous experience and a community of interest; it emerged not alone, but out of a groundswell of concern for the future of the professoriate.

From the first, architects of the program agreed that PFF must go beyond TA training. The focus of TA training is at the beginning of a student's career. TA orientation and development programs can be the starting point for a rich series of activities that change with a student's changing experiences, but they are nevertheless only a starting point. Typical TA training programs are primarily devoted to graduate students' teaching responsibilities in their home institutions. PFF takes the next step by introducing graduate students to a range of faculty roles and responsibilities, including not only teaching, but also service to the institution. Additionally, PFF exposes graduate students to the ways in which faculty balance these activities. The underlying concept is that graduate students should be prepared to enter the professoriate as competent professionals who have already begun a process of growth as scholars, teachers, and members of an academic community.

The PFF plan consists of three distinct but related parts: helping graduate students prepare for the vital responsibilities they will assume as tomorrow's college and university faculty, strengthening their preparation as teachers of undergraduate students, and creating new paths in doctoral education. To achieve these goals, PFF employs three core strategies: creating partnerships between doctoral universities and undergraduate institutions; creating university-wide forums through which graduate students may learn about faculty roles and responsibilities; and articulating departmental sequences of coursework, examinations, and research activities with a carefully developed series of professional preparation experiences. None of these strategies stand alone; each is reinforced by the others. Two threads, moreover, run throughout the entire PFF strategy: the integration of teaching and service into the research orientation of graduate training, and mentoring in professional roles.

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PFF STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

The national PFF program has funded seventeen clusters of institutions to create new models for graduate training. The lead institutions are: Arizona State University, City University of New York Graduate School and University Center, Cornell University, Duke University, Emory University, Florida State University, Howard University, Loyola University of Chicago, Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Northeastern University, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, University of Kentucky, University of Minnesota, University of Texas–Austin, and University of Washington.

Partnerships: Each cluster consists of a doctoral university working with a variety of other institutions, such as liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and comprehensive universities. These institutions, representing the institutional diversity of American higher education, are also the sites of the bulk of new faculty positions. We think that this partnership strategy brings the "producers" of new faculty members together with the "consumers" in a new relationship. Within each cluster, the doctoral university selects several disciplines (for example, English, mathematics, and history at the University of Washington) and gives senior graduate students in those disciplines the opportunity to spend time with faculty members in corresponding disciplines at each of the partner institutions. In addition to this one-on-one mentoring, graduate students' PFF experiences may include participating in teaching at a partner campus, attending departmental faculty meetings, and learning about faculty life at a variety of institutions. PFF partner institutions include eighteen community colleges, a number of liberal arts colleges, seven historically black colleges and universities, six women's colleges, six Research I universities, and seven land-grant universities.

University-Wide Activities: Each cluster of PFF institutions is responsible for developing and testing new models for supporting graduate students in their current responsibilities and preparing them for new ones. The cluster participants form plan-

ning teams consisting of graduate students, faculty members, and deans. Their job is to evaluate current programs; identify areas in which graduate students need more guidance, support, and experience in the fields of teaching, research, and service; design and lead workshops and seminars and create new sequences of teaching assignments; and explore the possibilities of creating new teaching and mentoring experiences on partner campuses for graduate student participants.

In addition to such special cluster activities, PFF programs seek out opportunities to enhance general university initiatives on teaching and learning. Here is where the partnership between PFF programs and TA training programs is closest. PFF programs work actively with college teaching and learning centers to develop new university-wide activities such as mandatory courses for graduate students on college teaching and learning and to support and expand existing initiatives.

Departmental Initiatives: The third PFF strategy focuses on the heart of graduate education: the experience of students in their disciplines and departments. In addition to university-wide programs, PFF seeks to articulate departmental sequences of coursework, examinations, and research activities with a carefully developed series of professional apprenticeship experiences. Each academic department has its own distinctive policies and practices, and any program of change for graduate education must enlist and empower the departments if it is to have any hope of long-term success. An example of a departmental initiative is the development of a graduate course on teaching within the discipline.

PFF IN PRACTICE—ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

What kinds of activities and programs have PFF clusters developed? Here is a sampling:

Primarily undergraduate institutions are engaging graduate students by:

- Assigning a teaching mentor to work with them
- Inviting them to attend faculty, committee, or departmental meetings
- Allowing them to shadow a faculty member or administrator for a day and discuss the meaning of his or her activities
- Affording graduate students the chance to discuss the graduate education experience with interested undergraduates
- Inviting them to participate in faculty development activities
- Discussing the missions and academic cultures of differing institutions

University-wide PFF activities include:

- Offering a seminar on the general issues of college teaching
- Organizing a seminar on professional and career issues taught by faculty and administrators from diverse institutions and held on different campuses
- Discussing teaching in a multicultural setting and teaching about diversity
- Explaining academic governance systems and inviting graduate students to attend faculty meetings or committee meetings
- Providing formal progression for graduate teaching assistants, with proper titles and a rising pay scale to reflect expanded responsibilities or growth as a professional
- Helping graduate students to develop portfolios documenting expertise in research, teaching, and service
- Training faculty to mentor graduate students
- Giving a certificate for the completion of a designed set of studies and experiences

Departments are:

- Working to identify at an early time students' interest in college teaching as a career
- Offering graduate courses on teaching within the discipline
- Providing graduate students with a sequence of supervised teaching experiences that build on earlier experiences
- Offering "academic professionalization" seminars
- Creating forums to discuss faculty histories, academic career paths, and alternatives in professional lifestyles
- Including questions about teaching and services on graduate qualifying examinations
- Providing financial support for graduate students to attend professional meetings with faculty members

Obviously, no single institution can undertake all these activities and initiatives. However, PFF cluster institutions have been able to forge remarkable programs of professional training by selecting from among these initiatives and adapting them to their own local resources and conditions.

PFF AND MENTORING

Creating partnerships, nurturing university-wide activities, and encouraging creative professional training within the graduate departments are all important structural changes; however, none can displace mentoring from the heart of graduate education. We know that mentors perform critical roles in the lives of successful students. Accordingly, strengthening and expanding the mentor–student relationship stands at the core of PFF programs.

Many PFF participants tell poignant stories about the value of their work with professional mentors at nearby campuses and institutions. Joe Rice, a PFF participant from the doctoral program in English at the University of Cincinnati, describes his work with a mentor from the faculty of Xavier University, a nearby liberal arts college:

> During the fall quarter I was paired with Dr. Ernest Fontana.... From Fontana I learned the art of tailoring both text (CV, cover letter, dossier) and performance (MLA interview and campus interview)....Part of my weekly interaction included what I dubbed "power lunches" at the Xavier fac-

ulty dining room, and which might more correctly be called "empowering lunches," for it was during these lunches that I came to understand the machinations of an institution of higher education.... By the time December and the MLA rolled around, I think I had answered...every question that would eventually be posed by the five search committees I interviewed with at the MLA convention, and I got a real sense of how an institution like Xavier worked. The combination of mentoring... and empowering lunches factored significantly in my positive interview experiences at the MLA convention and in my securing a position as assistant professor of English at East Tennessee State University.

Each PFF model is different. Glitches occur; not everything is working perfectly. However, if Joe's experiences are any guide, we are on the right track.

EXPERIENCES IN PFF: SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS

Evidence of the effectiveness of PFF does not rely solely on anecdotal testimony. A survey of participants at institutions in the PFF project was conducted during spring 1995. Five different groups were surveyed: graduate students, graduate faculty, partner faculty, graduate administrators, and partner administrators. Among the graduate students, responses were received from fifteen of the seventeen clusters. Returns came in from 186 students, a 79 percent response rate.

Students reported a number of benefits from their participation. When checking structured alternatives, the benefits chosen by the greatest number were "understanding of faculty roles" and "awareness of different types of institutions."

One of our major concerns about a program like PFF was that it might delay a student's time to degree. When asked about the influence of participation in PFF on time to degree, 12 percent reported that it "has delayed completion." However, 83 percent said that it "has had little influence," and 5 percent reported that it "has speeded up completion." It should be noted that a few programs featured substantial involvement in a number of activities, while others specified more limited or focused involvement. Different types of PFF programs might be expected to have differential impact on time to degree.

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We were interested to learn whether student participation in PFF was encouraged or discouraged by different types of persons. In general, they reported receiving overwhelming encouragement. For instance, 95 percent of respondents said that they were encouraged to participate by their department head, 92 percent by other graduate students, 84 percent by their major advisor, and 99 percent by the faculty at partner institutions. On the other hand, 16 percent reported being discouraged from participating in PFF by their major advisor, 13 percent by other faculty in their graduate department, 5 percent by their department head, and 9 percent by other graduate students. These mixed messages received by the graduate students suggest that further work might be done to secure greater faculty support for the PFF principles.

Despite some mixed messages from faculty members, graduate students themselves expressed overwhelming enthusiasm for the PFF concept. Fully 99 percent of graduate student respondents said "Yes" when asked whether they would recommend PFF to other doctoral students. Of that total, 31 percent indicated that their "Yes" was qualified by some reservations, such as the time demanded by PFF programs, time given over to administrative details, or appropriateness of PFF for certain disciplines. Sixty-eight percent of respondents, however, said they would recommend PFF to their peers without reservations.

Equally striking were the results when graduate student participants were asked where they hoped to find their first academic position after obtaining their degree. While 21 percent hoped to find employment at a research university, 45 percent selected a liberal arts college, 16 percent chose a comprehensive college or university, and 4 percent a community college. Fifteen percent chose another alternative, or checked two or more alternatives. These findings strongly suggest that PFF students have become aware of the diversity of higher education institutions and may have broadened their career options accordingly. Also, participation in PFF may have legitimated students who always wished to work in a setting other than a research university in talking about alterative career choices with their graduate faculty.

Responses from faculty and administrators to the survey were similarly supportive of PFF and reinforce the perspectives of the graduate student participants. Of particular interest was one bit of information gleaned from the administrators: the depth of interest in participating in the PFF programs by other departments at PFF campuses. Of the sixteen gradu-

ate program administrators responding to the survey, fifteen indicated that graduate students from departments not involved in the initial PFF effort were interested in participating in the program, while fourteen reported that department chairs or graduate coordinators in other departments had expressed interest. None of the administrators reported receiving expressions of interest from other graduate faculty members. Given the positive responses to PFF by participating students and faculty, the graduate student interest is not surprising; however, that administrators from nearly all the initial PFF clusters know of other departments wanting to participate is informative and encouraging for the future of PFF as an approach to doctoral education for new faculty careers that lay ahead.

Administrators at both graduate programs and partner campuses were also asked to judge the influence of university policies on PFF participation. Of forty-seven administrators responding, twenty-nine thought that university policies had little impact positively or negatively. Thirteen respondents thought that university policies encouraged involvement in PFF; five suggested that they discouraged participation. These data indicate the need to develop policies, perhaps including release time and other reward systems, at both graduate universities and partner institutions, to encourage positive support for future PFF programs.

Taken as a whole, the survey results indicate that new programs to more comprehensively prepare future faculty are regarded in a positive way by a majority—often a substantial majority—of individuals in all five categories of PFF participants. In a remarkable display of agreement, nearly all of the hundreds of PFF participants responding to the survey said they would recommend the PFF program to their colleagues—only two said that they would not.

THE MERITS OF THE PFF APPROACH

One of the fundamental problems in higher education is the imperative need to get faculty members to take *teaching* more seriously. Higher education policy makers have devised a variety of approaches to work toward that end. While I was still at Ohio State University, state lawmakers passed legislation requiring faculty in the state's colleges and universities to teach 10 percent more time, apparently with the expectation that this would cause them to devote more attention to their teaching. Following the passage of that legislation, the board of regents took another step in appointing a task force charged with recommending programs to enable not only *more* but *better* teaching on the state's campuses.

IN a remarkable display of agreement, nearly all of the hundreds of PFF participants responding to the survey said they would recommend the PFF program to their colleagues.

Admittedly, these are two strategies that can foster renewed attention to teaching. We might call them the *work allocation and workload* strategy (legislative edicts mandating increased hours of classroom teaching), and the *institutional support* strategy (establishing university-wide programs to encourage quality in teaching). Still a third approach, tried to some degree at many campuses throughout the country, focuses on *rewards*—revamping promotion and tenure policies and redefining merit pay review policies to emphasize teaching as well as research.

PFF posits a fourth way—one we might call *early intervention*. Rather than focus on teaching alone, the PFF strategy looks deeper and forces us to take notice of the full complexity of faculty roles. It then encourages us to devise means of *early intervention* to ensure that future professors are able to discharge all of their responsibilities without slighting any one of them. To do so, PFF takes advantage of graduate education's character as a process of socialization as well as of education.

The graduate experience inducts students into the life of the mind through a rigorous program of advanced studies. At the same time, it inculcates a set of norms and beliefs through a plethora of policies, practices, values, attitudes, requirements, and relationships. Until now, the object of this socialization has been to produce the consummate researcher. In our judgment, doctoral education can, through these same processes, also equip those who choose careers in the professoriate to develop the other characteristics of a faculty member. Graduate schools and academic departments participating in PFF consciously infuse the graduate experience with norms and beliefs, policies, practices, values, attitudes, requirements, and relationships that characterize the working ethos of the faculty member defined as researcher, teacher, and servant.

There is another important component of the PFF approach; call it *institutional fit*. The notion of institutional fit—of linking the "providers" with the "consumers" of Ph.D.s—underlies the cluster concept and our requirement that a doctoral university develop partnerships with a variety of other institutions. We intend through PFF to incorporate into graduate student socialization a kind of "clerkship"—as it is called in medical education—so that students can become familiar with the missions, cultures, and practices that characterize varied institutions. As a result of these experiences some students may make firm decisions about an institutional home for their careers; others will at least develop preferences.

What is important is that they will be better able to make informed choices between different types of institutions.

LOOKING AHEAD

We call upon graduate education today to create new paths in doctoral education. PFF can contribute vitally to this processes of change, but only if it can first surmount the challenge of institutionalization.

How can we do this? I begin with the premise that the responsibility for graduate education rests with graduate faculty members, graduate schools, and graduate students.

Faculty members establish departmental policies and practices, define minimum standards for acceptable graduate work in their disciplines, and ensure that both campuswide and program-specific standards are met. Through the close relationships they enjoy with their students and advisees, they also command a comprehensive view of the graduate student experience. They control the curriculum, and they direct individual students to information, coursework, and other advisors. If we are to change the culture of preparation, it therefore falls to graduate faculty to make some changes, both in their individual counseling and through their departmental and programmatic activities and their representation on graduate school councils. At the very least, graduate faculty can inform their work by understanding the dynamics of the job market that awaits their students. To those students who are drawn to academe, graduate faculty should offer not only career advice, but a set of structured experiences that will help them come to understand what it means to be an assistant professor.

Much of the faculty's work on behalf of graduate education is conducted through the graduate school. Through the faculty, the graduate school establishes a set of policies that define good practice in academic programs. It articulates a vision of excellence for the graduate community and provides quality control over all aspects of graduate education. These structures are all available to the graduate dean to support the review and reshaping of graduate education. By putting the organizational and administrative structure of graduate education to work in the service of changing the culture of preparation, graduate deans can keep the conversation going.

Doctoral students as well as faculty and administrators must take responsibility for their own education. That "graduate students must not be silent onlookers" is a sage piece of advice that the Graduate Division of the University of California–Berkeley gives to matriculating students as part of their formal orientation. The Berkeley orientation goes on to add that graduate students must learn about and take responsibility for a host of issues that affect their education, such as how curriculum changes can affect their careers. This is a message all graduate students today would do well to heed. Graduate students can and should raise questions, make suggestions, and serve on departmental and graduate school committees. They should make it known that the preparation they receive must address their future goals and make sure that they understand and adopt strategies that can get them ready to achieve those goals.

WORKING together, graduate faculty, graduate schools, and graduate students themselves can change the culture of preparation for future faculty.

Working together, graduate faculty, graduate schools, and graduate students themselves can change the culture of preparation for future faculty. Because of their distinctive characters, different programs and campuses will adopt different approaches to the problem. The goal is to be flexible. Whatever the local circumstances, however, one of the most effective resources for transforming graduate education is the Preparing Future Faculty program—and PFF is as close as a phone call.

There are a number of steps graduate faculty members, administrators, and students can take right away to ensure that reforms begin and take hold. The practice of employing teaching assistants is well established. But because preparing future faculty must go beyond teaching assistant training, we must fashion new plans as well. With imagination and creativity, we can construct bridges between TA training and preparing future faculty.

Among the strategies that can be implemented are:

- Engaging graduate faculty members in learning about PFF principles, plans, and core strategies
- Establishing and supporting departmental teaching assistant coordinators
- Pushing for institutional policies that tie teaching assistant support to involvement of faculty and departments in PFF principles
- Stressing the importance of a sequenced program of teaching assistant development that provides guided experience in different types of courses (e.g., the "advanced TA" experience)
- Stressing the value of PFF-style activities in helping graduates secure faculty positions at colleges and universities
- Inviting departmental alumni who hold faculty positions to speak at departmental forums on the relation of their experience in graduate programs to their current careers

Changes that are taking place in doctoral education for the professoriate are a healthy development. Through PFF concepts, models, and strategies, we can make change our ally. We need only the good sense to recognize it—to strengthen it—and to make sure that it takes hold.

Preparing Future Faculty is a joint project of the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools. It is funded by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

AAC&U

The Association of American Colleges and Universities is the national voice for liberal learning. Its membership includes public and private colleges and universities. Through national initiatives, networking, conferences, and publications, AAC&U advances and strengthens liberal education and promotes its integration with professional programs.

CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools is an organization of institutions of higher education in North America engaged in graduate education, research, scholarship, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Its membership includes 410 universities, granting 97 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in the United States.

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